

LOG CABIN. The first English colonists in North America did not know how to build houses of logs. They lived in shelters made of brush and bark until they could erect frame houses like those they had known in England. But colonists who had lived in the forests of Switzerland, Germany, and Scandinavia knew how to build log houses. Swedish settlers who came to Delaware in 1638 built the first log cabins in America. German pioneers who settled in Pennsylvania built the first log cabins there about 1710. But Scotch-Irish immigrants made the first wide use of logs when they moved to the "back country" of the Appalachian highlands after 1720. By the time of the American Revolutionary War, settlers along the whole western frontier were using log cabins.

The log cabin was not easy to build, although it required few tools. Builders used three types of logs: round, hewn on two sides, and squared. The logs had to be about the same size so that the cracks between them could be easily *chinked* (filled) with moss, clay, or mud. Builders had to be careful in cutting the notches where the logs fitted together. They usually covered the cabin roof with bark or thatch, and later with rough wooden shingles cut from logs. Most log cabins

did not have windows, because few people could afford glass panes. But settlers often covered openings with animal skins or greased paper. They made doors and floors from logs split lengthwise. The door was usually hung on leather hinges. Most log cabins had one story, with one or two rooms. Some had a loft for sleeping and storage, which people could reach with a ladder, or by steps cut into the cabin wall. Later, pioneers erected two-story log houses with several rooms.

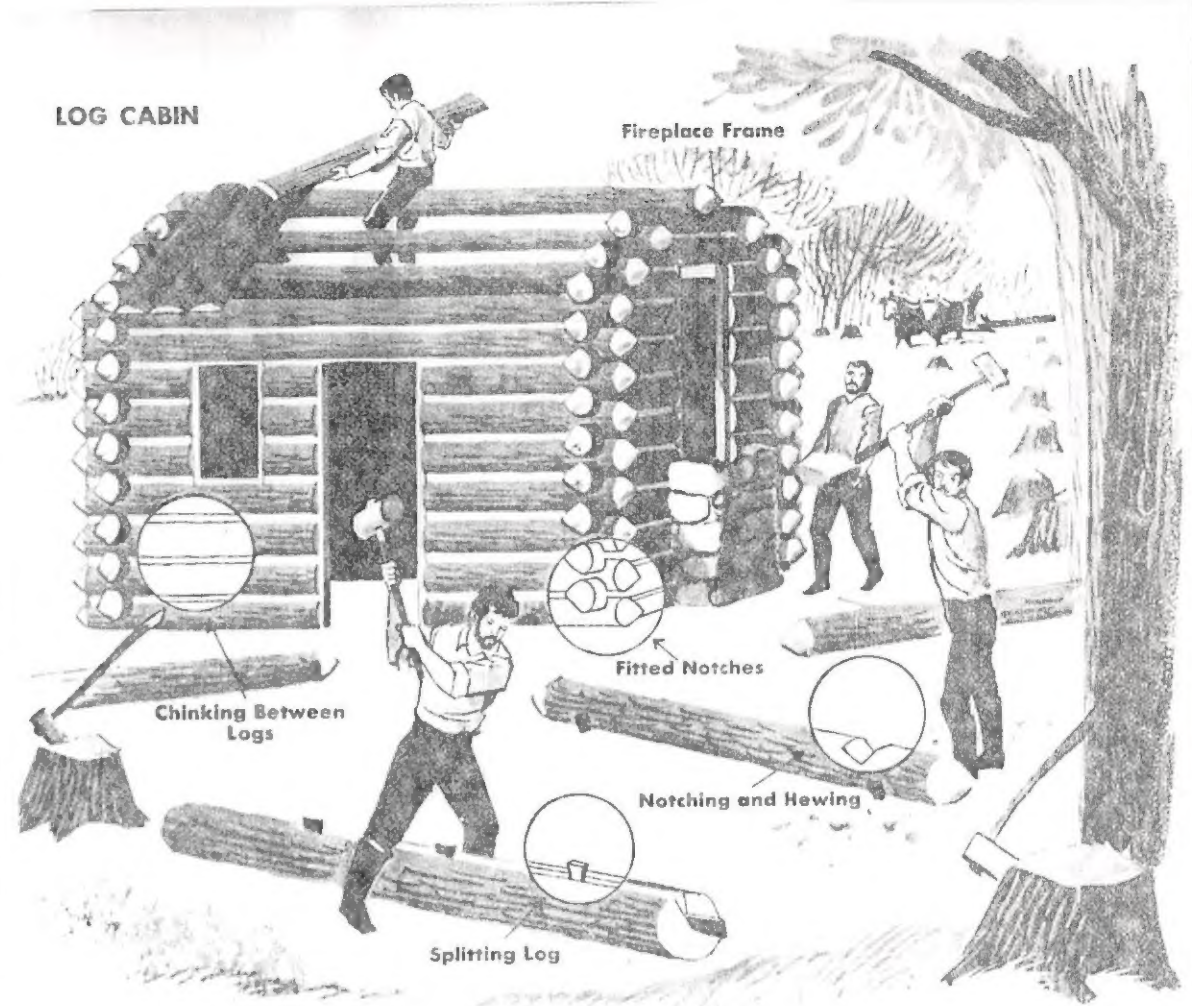
Many noted Americans, including Abraham Lincoln, were born in log cabins. To rise from such humble beginnings to become President has long been part of the American dream of equality and opportunity. The log cabin came to symbolize the dream of being able to improve one's place in life.

WALKER D. WYMAN

See also *PIONEER LIFE IN AMERICA (A Pioneer Home)*; *COLONIAL LIFE IN AMERICA (Houses)*; BUCHANAN, JAMES (picture); KENTUCKY (picture: Lincoln Birthplace).

LOG-CABIN AND HARD-CIDER CAMPAIGN. See HARRISON, WILLIAM H. (Elections of 1836 and 1840).

LOGAN (1725?-1786?), a Cayuga Indian chief, won fame for a stirring speech in 1774. White settlers along the Ohio River had murdered some Indians, including



American Pioneers Built Log Cabins entirely from the materials available in the wilderness. With their simple tools, they shaped, split, and notched logs to make these sturdy shelters. Log cabins served as both homes and fortresses on the frontier.